

Tushar Allotment Collaborative

June 2007 Field Meetings

Issues and Information Needs

June 12 and 21: Ten Mile Allotment

June 14 and 22: Pine Creek/Sulphurdale Allotment

I. Ten Mile Allotment

- **Small tributary into City Creek**
 - Trampling, downcutting of a spring-fed tributary (Cougar Canyon? Order Canyon?)
- **Aspen**
 - Decline of isolated aspen clones in an elevational band of 7,500-8,300': wild ungulate and cattle browsing of ramets
 - Issue of forest utilization standard (40% of current year's ramet twigs browsed) exceedance by wild ungulates prior to or cumulative with cattle grazing
 - Inability to protect the smaller clones without fencing; potential loss of individual clones if treated and then again overbrowsed.
 - Potential large-scale aspen/conifer prescribed burn on Cottonwood Allotment to the north. Possibility of drawing wild ungulates to aspen there.
 - New trough set for installment in an aspen grove that is failing.
- **Ten Mile Creek**
 - Conifer encroachment of aspen within the Ten Mile Creek corridor
 - Heavy fuel loading within the creek corridor; need for prescribed underburn
 - Uncertain degree of contribution of grazing to fire suppression (i.e., removal of fine fuels)
- **Mountain mahogany**
 - Ten Mile Creek site of multiple-age mountain mahogany (and possible causes e.g., elevation? Aspect? The pasture had been excluded from grazing 1999-2001?).
 - Lack of recruitment under individual or scattered mountain mahogany in many areas. Discussion of proportion of mt. mahogany on the allotments that is experiencing no recruitment and why.
- **Utilization**
 - Potential unmonitored exceedance of standards on native grasses or forbs sought by cattle prior to exceedance of standards on seeded exotic grasses.
 - Lack of Forest measurement of (1) browse on young aspen, willows, young shrubs, etc., and (2) bare soil in riparian area, despite Forest Plan standards for both

- Seeding of exotic pasture grasses vs. native plants on over-grazed sites.
 - Putting cattle on sites that have exceeded or largely met Forest standard triggers (e.g., for browse, utilization of native grasses) prior to cattle entry.
 - Difficulty of detecting respective proportion of utilization by elk, deer, and cattle
 - Sufficiency of forage to support current permitted cattle
 - Question of whether arrowleaf balsamroot dominance is an indicator of overgrazing.
- **Maintenance of livestock facilities**
 - Fences not being fully functional before cattle came on the allotment
 - No enclosure around Bumblebee Springs source

II. Pine Creek/Sulphurdale Allotment

- **Spring wetland in the north of the allotment**
 - Potential to pipe some of the water for a trough downslope (and how far downslope)
 - Potential to fence wetland with room for expansion of wetland
 - Potential to re-seed with native grasses within/around the enclosure
- **Beaver in Pine Creek**
 - Habitat appeared suitable for beaver (e.g., cottonwood, aspen, some willow) although no sign of past beaver activity
 - Aspen recruitment into Gambel oak and maple
 - Potential UDWR reintroduction of beaver by August vs. waiting until Spring 2008. Beaver are being killed as nuisance; could be brought to Pine Creek
 - Need for conversations with permittees about beaver reintroduction Permittee water rights for the entire season (i.e., lack of problem of water rights only before a particular date)
 - Potential conflict with ORV route criss-crossing the creek; route dead-ends at head of creek.
 - Potential for the road to be closed; closed to full-size vehicles; or seasonal closure
 - Need for/costs of/priority for repeated road maintenance to avoid capture of water flow by the road
 - Potential fencing of ridges to the north and south for better management of livestock within Pine Creek.
 - Foxglove patches
- **South Pine Creek**
 - Lack of herding/monitoring of utilization by either the permittees or the Forest Service

- Good diversity of grasses, forbs on some benches; domination on some benches by Kentucky bluegrass, and cheatgrass on parts of north and south slopes.
 - Potential exceedance of unmonitored utilization on the benches
 - Is not suitable habitat for beaver
 - Lack of riparian cottonwood recruitment; only a few small cottonwood
 - Lack of woody riparian species; uncertainty as to cause
 - Permittee water rights for the entire season (i.e., lack of problem of water rights only before a particular date)
- **Wildcat Pasture**
 - Acknowledgment for a decade of problems within Wildcat Creek/North Wildcat Creek
 - Lack of herding within the pasture by the permittees
 - Lack of utilization monitoring within the pasture by the Forest Service
 - Need for a Collaboration visit to Wildcat Creek/North Wildcat Creek

- **Maintenance of livestock facilities**
 - Overflowing water trough (improper installation) at north end of allotment
 - Need to clean pond and pipe water further north for better distribution at north end of allotment
- **Measurement of utilization**
 - Only one utilization cage on Pine Creek/Sulphurdale Allotment.
 - Demonstration of use of “wheel” by Doug Sorenson. Measures ten ungrazed plants (grasses/sedges); 30 grazed plants
 - Discussion of inability of the method to:
 - detect decline of native grasses/forbs
 - account for loss of plant vigor over time (i.e., utilization is measured against potentially stunted/stressed ungrazed plants)
 - account for over-grazing of grasses with short ungrazed stature
 - The method is subjective in terms of
 - which grass/sedge species will be measured (e.g., native? exotic seeded?)
 - which “grazed” grass plants will be measured (e.g., if a grass clump is mostly grazed, is the measurement taken on one of a few ungrazed culms?)
 - Need for supplementing utilization measurements with re-reading of long-term trend transects that exist on the two allotments (e.g., 7-8 exist on Pine Creek/Sulphurdale).
 - Lack of Fishlake NF reference areas for meadows/grasslands
- **Predator Control**
 - Coyotes are killed on the allotments [???

III. Information Needs Mentioned

- Most recent NAIP aerial photos of the allotments
- UDWR information on elk, hunting tags, cutthroat trout
- Location of long-term trend transects and their data
- Forest Service maps of fire and treatments/seedings history
- Maps of fire management policy/plans
- Riparian assessment reach maps
- Travel Plan maps
- History of debate re: Pine Creek ORV route
- Hydrology data/information on creeks/streams within the allotments
- Earliest aerial photos (e.g., 1930s if they exist)
- UDWR CORs [?] for beaver take on the allotments in past years
- Water rights on the two allotments